



EPA GAINING EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME REPORT

On the observership at the *“Department of Psychiatry, Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics,
University of Zurich, Switzerland*

Realised *“7–18 July 2025”*

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As a participant in the EPA Gaining Experience Programme 2024/2025, I had the opportunity to complete a two-week observership at the Department of Psychiatry, Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics at the University of Zurich. This experience allowed me to gain exposure to both adult and child psychiatry services in a leading academic and clinical setting, and provided an opportunity to reflect on how psychiatric systems are shaped by local resources, structures, and cultural contexts. As a psychiatrist trained in Cambodia and currently working as a fellow in France, the observership helped broaden my comparative understanding of psychiatric practice across countries.

During the placement, I was able to observe clinical activities across different units. In adult psychiatry, I spent time in a crisis intervention unit which is a dedicated hospitalization service that offers intensive support for patients experiencing critical psychiatric conditions. Observing the therapeutic structure of the unit, including team meetings, patient interactions, and multidisciplinary collaboration, gave me insight into how acute stabilization and recovery-oriented care are provided within a well-supported inpatient framework. The unit's focus on brief but structured intervention impressed me with its clarity of purpose and patient-centered approach.

In the area of child and adolescent psychiatry, I visited a number of settings including outpatient services, therapeutic programs, and adolescent units. These experiences allowed me to observe how developmental, educational, and family factors are integrated into assessment and treatment planning. Seeing the level of coordination among professionals such as psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists, and educators highlighted the importance of collaborative work in supporting young people with complex needs.

The clinicians I met across services were consistently welcoming and open to dialogue. I was grateful for their willingness to share insights into their practice, offer explanations during clinical rounds, and include me in their discussions. While the experience required some degree of adaptive scheduling, I appreciated the variety of services I was able to visit and the opportunities that arose to observe contrasting clinical settings. The flexible structure encouraged me to engage with the experience actively and independently, which brought unexpected learning moments as well.

Being currently engaged in clinical work in France, this experience in Zurich brought new perspectives to my understanding of psychiatric care within Europe. It allowed me to



compare different national models of service delivery and reflect on how systems respond to diverse patient populations and resource configurations. These comparative insights will inform my thinking as I continue to explore cross-cultural dimensions of care in both European and Southeast Asian contexts.

Although I did not give a formal presentation during the observership, I engaged in informal exchanges with colleagues about the mental health challenges faced in Cambodia, as well as my interest in youth mental health and transcultural psychiatry. I intend to share what I learned with colleagues and students, particularly regarding clinical organization, crisis intervention models, and interdisciplinary teamwork.

In conclusion, this observership was a valuable and thought-provoking experience. I am sincerely grateful to the European Psychiatric Association and to the hosting teams in Zurich for making this opportunity possible. It has contributed to my professional growth and further inspired me to pursue internationally informed approaches to mental health care that is grounded in empathy, collaboration, and cultural understanding.

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